

NEWS FROM

KHEAA–Alabama

100 North Union Street, Suite 390, Montgomery, AL 36104-3762

Phone: (334) 265-9720 Toll-free: (800) 721-9720

Fax: (334) 265-9750

Contact: Lori Powers

Phone: (502) 696-7378

E-mail: lpowers@kheaa.com

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Money Tips for College Students: How to Make It, Use It and Save It

Protect yourself against identity theft

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes and can affect anyone—including college students.

The first step is to protect your Social Security number (SSN), bank account and credit card numbers, PINs, passwords and other personal information. Never provide this information in response to a phone call, a fax, a letter or e-mail you receive — no matter how friendly or official the circumstances may appear.

Also be aware that friends, family members, roommates and workers who come into homes make up a large percentage of identity thieves. They often are in the best position to find and use confidential information.

Pick up your mail as soon as possible after delivery, or use a locked mailbox. Put outgoing mail in a blue Postal Service mailbox, hand it to a mail carrier or take it to the post office. Shred any documents that contain personal or financial information.

Never provide bank, credit card or other sensitive data when visiting a website that doesn't explain how your personal information would be protected, including its use of encryption to transmit and store data safely.

On your personal computer, install a free or low-cost firewall to stop intruders from gaining remote access to your PC. Download and frequently update security patches offered by your operating system and software vendors to correct weaknesses that a hacker might exploit.

Con artists often pose as charities or business people offering jobs, rewards or other opportunities. They hope that trusting souls will send cash or checks, provide SSNs or credit card numbers, or wire money from a bank account.

These tips are brought to you by the Alabama College Loan Program and KHEAA–Alabama, which have helped thousands of students pay for college. For more information about student financial aid and college planning, visit www.alstudentaid.com; write KHEAA–Alabama, 100 North Union Street, Suite 390, Montgomery, AL 36104-3761; or call 334-265-9720, toll free (800) 721-9720.